A SHORT and profitable Treatise, of lawfull and vnlawfull Recreations, and of the right vse and abuse of those that are lawfull.

Written by M. DVDLEY FENNER, *Preacher of the word of God in Middelburgh.*

1587.

Eccles. 2. 2.

I saye of laughter, thou art madde: and of gladnes, what doest thou?

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To the Christian Reader.

FOR recreation no better meane can be kept, then that which is iust & euen with the wyse mans measure, who said: *Be not too iust, neither make thy self too wise: for why shouldest thou make thy selfe desolate? Be not too wicked or a foole: for why shouldest thou dye before thy time?* Eccle. 7.18.19. For as they are too iust and too wyse, whiche beyond the rule of God his word, abridge the lawful libertie of honest exercise: so they are too wicked, which eyther make no choyse or keepe no measure in their recreations. Which thing is manifest by this, that the first sorte, doe eyther by immoderate austeritie be-numbe their giftes, or by a superstitious conceyte, make a shewe of godlines, where the power of it is wanting. The second, doe eyther by excesse make them selues drunckē, euen to death (yea sometimes of their bodyes,) or else by a sweete & fleshly delighte doe cast them selues into such a sleepe, as doeth partlie spoyle their giftes, partly make them slouthfull and idle to all good workes. For auoyding of both these extremities, I doe alwayes with Solomō exhorte all men *to laye good holde vpon the latter counsel*, least in passinge they become wretchles and prophane: also not *to pull backe their hande from the former*, least by contempte of an outwarde blessing, they decay in an inwarde grace. Because (I knowe) that will proue true which Solomon sayth, *He that feareth God, will escape out of all these pitfalls.*

For the better information of some to whom I am more especially bounde, I had written the shorte remembrance following, minding by priuate communicating of the same with them, further to prouoke their willing mindes, to make *streight steppes vnto their feete: least that which is halting, be turned out of the waye, when it ought rather to be healed.* Heb. 12.13.

But

But the perſwaſions of ſome who deſired to haue it common, and the commoditie of more eaſie communicating of it, this way, hath moued me, to make it thus common. The generall matter (I hope) none will miſlike. In the particular poynt of Lottes, if my reaſons, after the poyſing of them, by the weight of the Sanctuarie, be founde to light, I will beare that loſſe, ſo the reſt, being pure golde and ſiluer out of Gods worde, may paſſe. Yet I warne all, that when they come to weighe them, they bringe not only the Lordes waightes: but alſo keepe a ſteddie and true hande, in the doeing thereof.

Proue all: holde faſte that which is good: abſtayn from all appearance of euill: And if this doe thee any good, helpe me with thy prayers.

Thine in Chriſt Ieſus,

D. F.

Of

Of Christian exercises, playes, pastimes, or recreations.

The first Rule.

Of all the benefites of this life.

BEsides godlines contayned in the firste Table, & righteousnes in the seconde, There is commaunded in the whole, Sobrietie or temperance, which is the moderate and sparing vse of all bodilie benefites, as of foode, apparell, rest & recreation, the which temperance is a meanes to maintaine and increase both the other. Tit. 2. 11. *The grace of God teacheth vs, to denie all vngodlines and worldly lustes, and that we should liue soberlie, righteously, and godly in this present world.* 2. Pet. 1. 6. *Ioyne with your vertue knowledge, and with it temperance, and with that, godlines and brotherly loue, &c.* Whiche doeth shewe that this sparing vse of these benifites is commaunded as a nurse or staffe of godlines and righteousnes.

The

Declaring more plainly the nature of temperance.

ALl these must be sanctified by the word, with prayer before and thankesgiuing after, yea so vsed, as euery one doe it to the glorie of God, without offence, and keepe him selfe within his calling: as for the firste part the Apostle saith, 1. Tim. 4. 4. 5. *For euerie creature of God is good, and nothing is to bee refused, if it be receyued with thankesgiuinge, for it is sanctified by the word of God & prayer.* Whereby we gather, if meate and drinke, & the vse of mariage, must bee sanctified with the worde of God and prayer, much more recreations, whiche are not of that necessitie with the other, and whereby we are more in daunger to fall into abuse, especially the sober minded, who will not lightlie abuse the creatures of meate and drinke. For the second part he sayth: 1. Cor. 10. 31. *Whether therefore ye eate or drinke, or whatsoeuer ye doe, doe all to the glorie of God: Giue no offence, neyther to the Iew, nor to the Grecian, nor to the Church of God.* And agayn, *The apparell euen of women, must be such as becommeth godlines,* Tit. 2. & 3, 1. Tim. 2. 10. Much more must the same be vnderstood of recreations, as both the nature of them compared with the nature of meate and drinke (more ne-

ceſſarie then recreations) and his generall wordes, *Whatſoeuer* doe conuince.

The third rule.

Of the vſe of them to the glorie of God.

TO vſe theſe things to the glorie of God, is ſo to vſe them, as we neither be drunk or aſleepe in them, as the Apoſtle ſayeth, *Which are the workes of the night and darknes: not of the day. 1. Theſ. 5. 6. 7. 8.* To be drunke is to be ouercome with the delight or the motions which they procure, ſo as wee fall to open outrage of ſwearing, chaffng, fretting, quarrelling, and ſuch like, whiche wee would neuer doe being ſober in our vſe of recreations, or any ſuch other benefites. To ſleepe in them, is to be ouertaken with delight of them, as it occupieth our mindes and bodies, in ſuch ſorte, as it maketh vs vnwatchfull againſt the motions of ſinne, as it breaketh our reaſtes, and weaneth vs frō ſome ducties of our calling, and the ſeruice of God: making vs to reſt from theſe things as ſleepe doeth from our labours, when as all theſe are giuen to the cleane contrarie end, ſo the Apoſtle expoundeth him ſelfe, ſaying: *Let vs not ſleepe as doe others, but lett vs watch and be ſober. 1. Theſ. 5. 6.* And our Sauiour Chriſt giueth warning, That we be not oppreſſed with theſe things, leaſt that

day

day come on vs vnawares: and we are commaunded, to reioyce in them, as if we reioyced not. 1. Cor. 7. 30. That is, so as the pleasure we take in these benefites be no more hinderance to any good duetie of the first or second Table, then if wee had no vse of them at all.

The fourth rule.

Of the vse of them without offence.

TO vse with offence, is then to vse them when it edifieth not, or hindereth the weake in godlines, whereas the abstayning from them, bringeth no hurt to the abstayners, or at the least very small, as S. Paul in the first to the Cor. 6. 12. saith: *All things are lawfull vnto me, but all things profite not: All are lawful vnto me, but I will be brought vnder the power of nothing. Chap. 10. 23. All things are lawfull vnto me, but all things edifie me not. Rom. 14. 20. All thinges are cleane, but euill to him that eateth with offence:* It is good neyther to eate flesh, nor drinke wine, nor doe any thing whereat thy brother stumbleth, wherewith he is offended, or weakened.

The fift rule.

Of the keeping within our calling.

TO keepe within the cõpasse of ones calling, is neyther to goe aboue our abilitie in them, nor yet aboue those with whõ God

God hath ſorted vs in age, degree, cõdition of life & trade: but in dyet, apparell, recreation, to ſquare our ſelues according to the moſt ſober of our age, degree, condition & ſorte of life. Apparell muſt not bee coſtlie, 1. Tim. 2. 9. Now that is coſtly to euery one which is aboue his abilitie: And if this be a rule for apparell, much more in recreation, ſo that he which doth play more away thẽ he may well without any doubt or ſcruple, beſtow vpõ honeſt delight (neceſſarie maintenance of other things, and liberall cõtribution to the poore proporcionally to his meaſure, being firſt prouided) doeth abuſe his recreation. 2. Sam. 13. 18. And ſhee had a garment of diuers colours, for with ſuch garmentes were the Kings daughters (that were virgins) apparelled. So the h. Ghoſt ſheweth, that Dauid gaue no occaſion to the euill which came on his daughter, becauſe in apparel (and ſo in other ſuch benefites) he kept her within the rule appointed, that is, of her age, degre, & condition of life, which is the cauſe why he giueth a reaſon for it, leaſt the Reader ſhould ſuppoſe that the occaſiõ had bin partlie offered by ſome ſuch abuſe in Dauid his daughter.

Special

Speciall rules of recreation.

1. VVhat is a Christian recreation.

A Christian recreation is an exercise of some thing indifferent both for the nature and vse of it, only for the necessarie refreshing of the body or minde or both. So are allowed in the scriptures the vse of the Bowe. 2. Sam. 1. 18. Of Musicke, Nehe. 7. 67 Of hunting, Cant. 2. 7. but so as we doe not stirre vp or prouoke Christ with it. Lastlie, for the exercise of wit, honest ridles, Iud. 14.

Rules for the better vnderstanding of euery parte of the declaration of Christian exercise: And first vvhat is indifferent both in nature & vse.

1. *In nature.*

AN indifferent thing in nature is that, which is left free, so as wee are not simplie commanded, or forbidden to vse it, but when we shall finde it in Christan wisdome beneficiall, or hurtfull vnto vs. Such is not the taking vpp of the iesture, behauiour, or speech of euill men: or the fayning of them in playes, because we are expresly forbidden to take vp the outward fashion, or shape of the lustes of our ignorãce. 1. Pet. 1. 14. where the word [Suschematizomenoi] which the holy Ghost vseth, signifieth that very maner of fayning the outwarde shewes whiche are

vsed

vsed in playes. Such also is not that whiche Solomon speaketh of, to cast firebrandes, arrowes, & deadly things, and say, Am I not in sport? Pro. 26. 18. 19. Such is not the daũsing of men and women togither, whiche thing neyther agreeth with the shamefastnes of the one, nor with the grauitie of the other. Nay, the very sight of it in a woman is founde to ouerwhelme men more then strong drinke, Mark. 6. 22. And necessarilie draweth with it that which Salomõ giueth to vnchast women: That her feete dwel not in the house. Prou. 7. 11.

2. In vse.

BY a thing indifferẽt in vse, is meant that which is not onely free to bee vsed, but also conuenient in that time and place, before those persons where wee are presentlie to vse the same: as if the thing be made by the law vnlawfull, and withall to haue no good report, prayse, or vertue in it, then is it not indifferent. Phil. 4. 8. as dycing, wanton pictures, vaine gestures, or what soeuer hath any shewe of euill. 1. Thes. 5. 10. 22. Lastly, they are not indifferent in vse, if they giue offence, as hath bin proued before.

The 3 rule: Of the only both lawfull, and proper end of exercise.

EXercises must be only for the refreshing or stregthning of the body or minde, or both: for by this they differ from all other bene-

benefites graunted of God. Therefore as he that oppresseth the harte with meate and drink, abuseth those benefites and his actiō is vnchristian, so hee that spendeth much time, breaketh his rest, weaneth his minde from any duetie of godlnes, he abuseth exercise or pastime: for of such abuse saith Solomon, *There is away which is right in the sight of men, whose ende is the way to death: yea with laughter the minde is made heavie, and at the last gladnes is made sorrow, Pro. 14. 12. 13.* Such ioy and pastime he calleth madnes & follie. Eccle. 2. 3. So in the prophet Esa, 5. 12 a woe is threatened to them, in whose banquetts is the Harpe, Viol, Pype. &c. But the worke of the Lorde is not looked vppon, and they cōsider not the work of his hand. So we are commaunded, To redeeme the time. Ephe. 5. 16. which wee doe not, when our exercises doe not make vs more fitte to all godly dueties.

The 4. rule: What things are vnlawfull to be vsed in recreation.

BEcause recreation must be in indifferent things, neither simply commanded nor forbidden, therefore thinges sanctifieth to some especiall and holy vse, must not bee made a recreation: as we must not pray, vse the worde, or such like, for recreation, but for necessarie duetie in that maner whiche

God

God hath preſcribed. Vpon this it cõmeth, that I thinke with diuers godly and learned men, that the vſe of a Lotte for recreation, is vnlawfull, becauſe a Lotte is an eſpeciall meanes whereby God hath ordained by him ſelfe from heauen, to end ſuch cõtrouerſies, as otherwiſe can not conueniently be ended, as Prou. 16.23. *The Lotte is caſt in to the lappe, but the whole diſpoſition of it is of the Lorde.* So the nature of a Lotte lyeth wholy in this, that although the thinge be of vs, yet the diſpoſition is wholy of God, that is, he vſeth not here our meanes of cũning, practiſe, ſtrength, ſteadines, of hande, or ſuch like, but taketh it wholy to him ſelfe. As this ſheweth the nature of the lot, ſo Prou. 18.18. The holy ghoſt ſheweth the onely lawfull vſe of it, ſaying: *The Lotte remoueth contentions, and maketh partitions amongſt the mightie:* So ſhewing that the only lawfull vſe of it, is to ende controuerſies which otherwiſe can not conueniently bee ended, for each contender without the lott, is too mightie to yeelde.

Firſt, becauſe as it is meant of an oathe, Heb. 6.16. when he ſayeth, For men verilie ſweare by him that is greater then thẽ ſelues, & an oath for confirmation is amongſt them an ende of all ſtrife, that he would by theſe words not ſo much teach vs that men

vſe

vse an oath to end controuersies (which euery one knoweth) but that God hath dedicated and made an oathe holy and sure, onelie for that vse of necessarie deciding of doubts of importance amongst men: so in the like wordes in this place of the Prouerbes, concerning a Lotte, must be vnderstoode in the same sence, not so much to teach vs, that a lotte ended such cõtrouersies amongst men (which all know) but that God hath ordayned it only for that vse.

Secondly, we see that the Scripture maketh a Lot, so the sentence of God, as in the most waightie matters of God and man, of life and death, it is the verie Oracle and declaration of God his will, wherin man must rest without any contradiction or motiõ to the contrarie. So Act. 1. 24. 26. Num. 26. 55. Leui. 16. 8. for matters of God. So Iosua. 14 for the matters of lyfe: yea the Gentils themselues knew it to be the very oracle of god, Ionas 1. 7. Nowe such oracles of God, must not be vsed for recreation: seeing they are his name, and must not be vainly vsed.

Thirdly, al Lottes vsed in recreation, doe either necessarilie drawe or tempte the very best, to horrible prophaning of gods name, as to thinke or say, What lucke is this! how crooked? Which in playne wordes (vnles we will brutishly giue God glorie vnto For-

tune,

tune) is, What a god? what peruerſe & crooked prouidence of God is this. Neyther is the caſe here as in other paſtimes, where our owne infirmitie or want of skill may be blamed for all imperfection, becauſe in a Lot nothing can be accuſed, but Gods immediate direction. From all this I gather, that Dyce, dealing of Cardes, or ſuch like, where the matter is layd on hazard (as they call it) or rather God his prouidence, without vſing any cunning of ours to diſpoſe it, is vpō the ſame reaſon of a Lot vnlawful. Neither is it any reaſon to ſay, We vſe it not now, to end controuerſies, or to ſo waighty vſe, but onely for an honeſt recreation: for the end for which we vſe it, is not of the nature of the Lot, but only of the vſe or abuſe of it. For when the Iewes caſt lottes for our Sauiour Chriſt his garments, it was ſtill in the nature of a Lot, though the good ende of a Lot was layde aſide. And ſeeing in all theſe the whole diſpoſition of it to trie the matter, (which is, what caſt wee ſhall haue, or what Cardes towardes a good game) is wholie in the Lorde, and not in any cunning (vnleſſe wee cogge, cheat, & play falſe play, which thing the very Royſters condemne) it is manifeſt, that it remayneth in the nature of a Lot, to what ende ſoeuer we vſe it. It is manifeſt (I ſay) not by my collection,

but

but by the expresse declaratiõ of Solomon yea by the common graunt of all, who saye in the lightest matters, Let vs putt it to lott, chaunce, hazarde, &c.

Lastlie, my hartie desire is in the Lorde, that if these reasons cannot perswade my good Brethren, to thinke this vnlawefull, (which in my iudgement is euidentlie proued to bee so) that they would (as I hope they will) be perswaded, vppon the reasons of the h. Ghost following, to abstayne from that whiche although it were lawfull, yet they may exchang with many other recreations, as pleasaunt and of greater prayse, as Chesse, Musicke. &c. First, because wee shall by it offend the church of God, which the Apostle expresly forbiddeth to be done in an indifferent matter, 1. Cori. 10. For the church of God, for the most part, both long agoe and in these dayes, hath left it vppon these reasons: & we cã not be ignorant, that many godly persons with griefe will maruaile to heare it vsed of vs. For maintenance of this reason, the Apostle saith in the 14. vnto the Romanes: *If thy Brother be grieued for thy meate, thou walkest not according to charitie.* Secondly, because we shall cõtrarie to the like cõmandement of the Apostle, offende those which are without, 1. Cor. 10. when they hearing wee professe so much

zeale

zeale in Religō, good order, and other such like, they will say, Yet they vse these vaine pastimes, as well as others: yea when they may haue better. Of whiche the Apostle saith expresly, in the 14. chap. to the Rom. *Why should your good be blasphemed?* that is, euill spoken of. Thirdlie, because they shall confirme others, who can not but greatly abuse it, when by vsing others in steede of it, they may drawe them to a right and lawfull vse of recreation.

FINIS.

Ecclesiastes 10.17.

WOe to thee O Land, when thy King is a childe, (*in wit or in manners*) and thy Princes eate in the morning (*that is, out of season.*)

18 O blessed art thou, O Lande, when thy King is the sonne of Nobles, and thy Princes eate in time, for strength and not for drinkes sake,

19 thy louth of both hands the roofe goeth to decay, and by the hanging downe of the handes, the house droppeth thorough.

20 When they prepare the banket for gladnes, and wine reioyceth the liuing: and money it selfe answereth all things.

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